

14 August 2024

FOI Ref 16882

Request - You asked us the following:

Under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I am writing to request information from your police force regarding dog-related incidents reported during the following periods: 1st February 2022 – 1st May 2024 for each month

1. Dog Attacks:

- a. Please provide the total number of dog attacks reported during each of the specified periods.
- b. For each reported dog attack, please provide:
 - Location of the incident (e.g., home, public place).
 - Breeds and age of dogs involved (if recorded) for each report.
 - Relationship between the victim and the dog (e.g., owner, family member, stranger).

2. Reports About Out-of-Control Dogs:

- a. Please provide the total number of reports concerning out-of-control dogs during each of the specified periods.
- b. For each report, please provide:
 - Location of the incident (e.g., home, public place).
 - Breeds and age of dogs involved (if recorded) for each report.

I understand that certain details might be redacted to protect the privacy of individuals involved. However, please provide as much information as possible within the constraints of applicable privacy laws.

We received your request on 16/05/2024 and have processed this under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Please find below our response.

In accordance with Section 17(1) of the Freedom of Information Act, this letter represents a refusal notice for this particular request.

Staffordshire Police discloses/withholds the following information.

1. Dog Attacks:

- a. Please provide the total number of dog attacks reported during each of the specified periods. – **Withheld.**
- b. For each reported dog attack, please provide:
 - Location of the incident (e.g., home, public place). – **Withheld.**
 - Breeds and age of dogs involved (if recorded) for each report. – **Withheld.**
 - Relationship between the victim and the dog (e.g., owner, family member, stranger). – **Withheld.**

2. Reports About Out-of-Control Dogs:
 - a. Please provide the total number of reports concerning out-of-control dogs during each of the specified periods. – **Withheld.**
 - b. For each report, please provide:
 - Location of the incident (e.g., home, public place). – **Withheld.**
 - Breeds and age of dogs involved (if recorded) for each report. – **Withheld.**

The above information has been withheld for the following reasons:

There is no method by which we can readily retrieve information from our systems to answer this request. The data Staffordshire Police collects isn't segregated between 'Dog attack' and 'Out of control' due to the variability of both of those circumstances being true at any one time, therefore the data relating to all incidents would require manual review to determine which incident related to each question.

Furthermore, no specific field exists in which each dog breed or age and relationship between victim and dog are recorded and further manual review of each incident log would be required in order to determine whether either was mentioned within the main body of the log. For the time period requested, there have been in excess of 1,100 occurrences involving a 'dog attack', and in order to determine the breed or age of the dog, where this information is held, the record for each incident would require manual review. To extract this data would therefore require a very labour-intensive manual trawl through each record.

From dip sampling, it has been estimated that it would take approximately 3 minutes to review each record to answer this request, this would equate to over 55 hours. To achieve this task would therefore exceed the 18-hour time and cost threshold of the Freedom of Information Act by some considerable margin.

The following exemptions have been applied:

- Section 12(1) where the cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit.
Section 12(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the prescribed limit'.

Advice and assistance

Section 16 of the Act places an obligation upon the Authority to provide advice and assistance, in order to comply with this obligation please see below.



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

If your request was refined to remove the requirement to provide breed and age of dog and the relationship of the victim to the dog, Staffordshire Police would be able to provide data relating to the number of dog incidents, broken down by month/year.

Next steps

You can ask us to review our response.

If you would like us to carry out a review of our response, please let us know within two months of the date of receipt of this email, review requests should be addressed to:

foi@staffordshire.police.uk

Or by Post to:

Central Disclosure Unit
Staffordshire Police HQ
PO Box 3167
Stafford
ST16 9JZ

Please remember to quote the reference number in any future communications.

Freedom of Information
Central Disclosure Unit